593 x 152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- mutatis mutandis.

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider [621] each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group.

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: bǒna [30] l'onkáná, ndekí nd'ônkáná). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

583x 602 607 Thus the person who is herself the object of a bride price is the nkita. The first generation born of the nkɔ́lɔ́ calls her bonkita. In the third generation the term nkwâ y ăúmbâ is applied to the relationship.

For example:

mother	Lokɔ́njɔ́	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangâ
mother	Lokɔ́njɔ́	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	
grandson . .	Etsîha	. . . . benkita of Ifangâ
mother	Lokɔ́njɔ́	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangâ
grandson . . .	Etsîha	nkwâ y'ăúmbâ of Litâola

●[603] [169] The bonds between the nkɔ́lɔ́'s grandsons and the nkita's grandsons are loosened because respect and authority between grandparents and grandsons are more or less nominal; in practice they no longer exist. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

If the nkɔ́lɔ́ leaves no descendants, the nkita's sons are freed from any obligation. Just as the Nkundɔ́ like to be able to call someone their nkita or their bokwâ so, too, they take pride in not belonging to a nkɔ́lɔ́.

583x 607 Men who bear the title of nkɔ́lɔ́ may, under given circumstances, have duties towards their benkita, especially the obligation of taking active part in getting together the amount of a bride price. If the nkɔ́lɔ́ has provided his bonkita with a wife, the latter must treat him like his father (giving him assistance, the father's portion of the meat of a game animal, etc.).

582 and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives
602 [576] are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batɔ́mɔ́lɔ́ (sing. botɔ́mɔ́lɔ́). [601] The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bǎna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakǔnɛ́ (sing. bokǔnɛ́).

[595] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundɔ́ term and bakilɔ́ are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundɔ́ terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likilɔ́ or bakilɔ́, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bǒme, "husband," or wǎli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundɔ́, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

582
606
●603

Example 1

Bakando (F)
|
Mbóyó (M) + Esalé (F)

Mbóyó may never marry Bakando.

Example 2

Eale (M) + Boónú (F)
|
Mbélú (F)

Eale may never marry Mbélú.

Example 3

Bombembí (M)
|
Iké́té (M) + Basúsó (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basúsé. (1)

[691]
[586]

1. If after the death of his son Iké́té, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4

Esalo (M) - Longú (F)
|
Lofété (M)

Lofété may marry Longú.

N. B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's (F) passion unless he is the nkɔ̂lɔ́ of his sister (E), that is, unless the mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkɛ́nɛ́) to his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundɔ́ the affection of a grandfather (nkɔ̂-ko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his

1. As happens very often also in Europe. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor, public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circumstances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

2. We have seen above that other Nkundɔ́ tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundɔ́ group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

603 837 626 184

higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837 602

The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

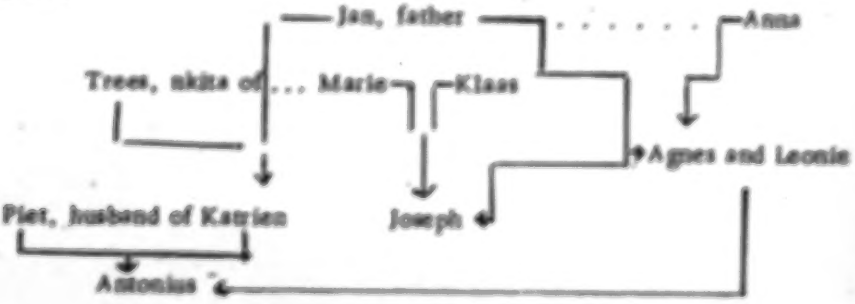
602 837 484

a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm or leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
589 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
595 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
562 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
603 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:

[338]



583 604 603 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

000 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly ... and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339] The Origin of the Nkita?

594 583 562 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita